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REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

SINCE the Annual Meeting of May 11, 1898, the Academy has lost by death nine members : — two Resident Fellows, John Cummings, Samuel Eliot ; five Associate Fellows, Alvan Wentworth Chapman, Thomas McIntyre Cooley, James Hall, Othniel Charles Marsh, David Ames Wells ; and two Foreign Honorary Members, Pierre Cécile Puvis de Chavannes and William Ewart Gladstone.

JUSTIN WINSOR.

THE career of JUSTIN WINSOR is remarkable both for what he accomplished, and for the way in which he accomplished it. There is a proverb that a man must make his mark before he is thirty, or he will never make it at all ; but at that age Mr. Winsor had done little to attract public attention, or to give certain promise of great future usefulness and renown. The forces of his nature were still maturing, and it was not until the middle point of life had been passed that he gave proof of effective power. But the right opportunity had no sooner been presented than his intellectual resources and the vigor of his character were displayed with marvellous rapidity. Every decade revealed him as a leader in some new field of work, and in each he was a pioneer and a master.

He was born in Boston on January 2, 1831, and got his early education there. As a boy he was exceedingly fond of reading, and kept a diary in which he entered many statistics, scraps of history, and miscellaneous notes of all sorts. But he disliked school with its tasks, and did not enter Harvard College until he was more than eighteen years old, — rather an advanced age for a Boston boy in those days. His childhood, indeed, showed more than one point of contrast with his later life, for his silent, reserved, and somewhat unsociable tendencies were no less marked in his youth than his genial sympathy was in after times. The

qualities of his boyhood followed him to college and grew stronger there. He led the same half solitary life, devoting most of his time to reading by himself. He both read and wrote with the furious energy that always characterized him ; yet at the time his efforts seemed fruitless, or at least misdirected. Before coming to college he had, it is true, written a History of the Town of Duxbury, which was published in his Freshman year ; but although his ambition lay in literature, he met with no further success to encourage him. He took, for example, a great interest in the stage, and wrote dramas that were never acted. In 1850 he planned a life of Garrick, and for the next fifteen years he worked upon it, collecting a vast quantity of materials, but it never saw the light. He did not abandon, however, his love for historic research, and about this time he devised a systematic method of taking and arranging notes of his reading. This he continued to employ until near the end of his life, and by its aid he accumulated a reservoir of knowledge that was invaluable when an active career opened before him.

Although essentially a scholar, Mr. Winsor paid little attention to the curriculum of the College. At last it became irksome, positively repulsive to him, and, instead of graduating with his class in 1853, he left College, with the approval of President Sparks, at the beginning of his Senior year, and sailed for Europe. The next two years he spent in Paris and Heidelberg, reading, of course, assiduously, learning the languages, and preparing a book of translations and criticisms of German poetry. This again was never published as a whole, though many parts of it afterwards appeared in a fugitive form in several magazines.

In the autumn of 1854 he came home, and the next fourteen years were passed in study, and in writing frequent literary contributions for "The Crayon," "The Round Table," and other periodicals. A great deal of work was devoted also to his life of Garrick, which was brought nearly to completion ; but as yet he had not found his true career. He had been industrious, but far less successful than his talents warranted, because his immense energy had not been turned in a direction where it could be effective. It is impossible to say how long it would have been before he discovered the right path, if an accident, or something very like an accident, had not revealed it to him.

In 1866 he was appointed a Trustee of the Boston Public Library, and the next year he made a report which attracted attention, and showed that he had grasped in a most extraordinary degree the problem of managing a great public library. In fact it outlined the changes that he was himself to carry out within the next few years. It so happened

that in 1868 the Superintendent died, and Mr. Winsor was asked to take the place, at first merely as a stop-gap, but soon as the permanent successor. His career had at last begun, and was destined to grow greater and greater till his death.

Mr. Winsor's opinions on libraries were at this time somewhat heretical. He believed that, to be useful, books ought to be read, and that the more they were read, the greater their usefulness became. He therefore strove not only to permit, but to encourage, in fact even to tempt, the public to use the library freely. With this object he lowered the age at which young people were allowed to take out books, and reduced the guaranties required of borrowers. He also gave up the customary habit of closing the library for a month every year for the purpose of cleaning and of inspecting the books, and he opened new avenues to the public by establishing branch libraries in various parts of the city. But this in itself was not enough for him, nor was it the most remarkable part of his innovations. To most people, a great library is nothing but a museum of incomprehensible things, — a labyrinth in which it is impossible to find one's way. Such people are perplexed and discouraged, feeling that the treasures of a library can be used only by the few learned persons who understand such subjects. Now Mr. Winsor set to work to make threads by means of which any one could find his way through the intricate maze of books, and he devised for that purpose a system of bulletins and annotated catalogues. Here his long habits of diligent reading and study and his prodigious memory helped him, for they had enabled him to acquire a bibliographic knowledge of marvellous range.

By methods of this kind, the annual circulation of books was increased seven-fold during Mr. Winsor's nine years' tenure of office. All these things have been developed since his time to such an extent that one finds it hard to realize how recent they are. The Boston Public Library does a vast deal more for the public to-day, and gives more assistance to readers in finding books by mean of bulletins and special catalogues than ever before, and all this is a development of the policy in which Mr. Winsor was a pioneer. The result has been to make reading more general throughout the community. It may almost be said to have made a thorough use of the library possible, for with the vast growth in the number of books the public would have found their use increasingly difficult without the system of dictionary catalogues that has come into existence.

Mr. Winsor had shown that he possessed both the capacity to conceive

what a great public library should be, and the executive ability to carry out his ideas. He was soon the foremost figure among the librarians of the United States, and in 1876 he was elected the first President of the newly formed American Library Association; but as yet he was not an historian. During his stay at the Public Library, his bibliographical work was connected rather with the institution than with the progress of American history. In 1877 he was transferred from the Boston Public Library to that of Harvard University. At the Harvard Library there still lingered traces of the old pagan superstition that the worst enemy of books was the general reader, who ought to be kept away from them by every competent librarian. But times were changing. The laboratory method of instruction had been winning one field of education after another, until it was rapidly becoming universal. Now Mr. Winsor, in harmony with the views that were rapidly gaining ground with the Professors, looked upon a library as being, for educational purposes, the laboratory of the literary and historical branches of study; and he gave his most cordial co-operation in putting the largest number of books at the disposal of the students with the greatest possible freedom.

But his work at Harvard was by no means confined to increasing the usefulness of the library. Without deserting his old line of activity, he opened a new one. He continued to write and edit bibliographies on various subjects, the most notable at this period being the "Readers' Handbook of the American Revolution," published in 1879. At the same time he made a new departure by undertaking to write history. Since he published his *History of Duxbury* as a lad, he had never lost his interest in the subject, and had never failed to devote much time to the study of it; but for more than thirty years he had not attempted to produce a history, and, when at last he took this work up again, it was in the new and peculiar form of co-operative authorship. In his earliest venture of the kind, the "Memorial History of Boston," published in 1880-81, he divided and assigned the various portions of the work among a number of writers, while he annotated the whole himself. The first experiment was soon followed by another, the "Narrative and Critical History of America," which was prepared upon the same plan, and published in parts from 1885 to 1889. These works have been criticised on the ground that they lack unity, and that the parts are of unequal value,—defects inseparable from the co-operative authorship. In fact, they are not histories so much as storehouses of information for historical students, and in this they fulfil the purpose for which they were designed. Mr. Winsor intended them to be a bibliographical and critical

record of all the sources of American history down to the middle of the present century, and he made himself beyond question the first authority on the subject in the United States. In fact, his position among historians was recognized by his election as President of the American Historical Association, just as his standing among librarians had been shown when he was chosen President of the American Library Association ten years before. In the seventies, he had surprised the world by proving himself a great librarian. In the eighties he had become a leading historian, and the first bibliographer of American history. The nineties were to show him in still another light.

Among the subjects in which he had always been interested, and which he treasured in his note books, was the study of maps, and this in turn was developed until he became the first cartographer of the United States. He applied his knowledge of maps to the subject of the discovery of America, and made himself so distinctly the authority on the geographical questions connected with the discovery and settlement of this country that the government naturally had recourse to him in the controversy about the Venezuela boundary. In a few years he produced four remarkable books, prepared, not as the earlier ones had been, on the co-operative plan, but written entirely by himself. The first of these four books, "The Voyages of Columbus," was published in 1891; the second, "Cartier to Frontenac," appeared in 1894; it was followed the next year by his work on the "Mississippi Basin"; and finally the last of the four on the "Western Movement," was in press at the time of his death, on October 22, 1897.

Industrious, painstaking, and energetic, Mr. Winsor accomplished an incredible amount of work in the last thirty years of his life; for it must be remembered that, although his work at the Boston Public Library was doubtless more arduous than that at Harvard, nevertheless the management of the Harvard Library is no sinecure, and he was managing this with the greatest diligence and efficiency during the very years when he was writing his great works on American history. But although his life became more and more full of labor as the years went by, he did not become absorbed in his work to the exclusion of other things, — he did not become so pressed that he could not spare time for social intercourse. On the contrary, his solitary habits wore away as his own life grew fuller, and with the increase in his activity and usefulness there developed his genial social side, his warm friendship for his fellows, and his kindness for younger men.

A. LAWRENCE LOWELL.